

Marketing & Promotion

One of the biggest tools you have at your disposal in developing and offering a new ride service to your community is the **Road Crew** identity itself. In the early stages of developing this social marketing initiative, project leaders recognized the importance of developing an appealing name, logo and identity for the program along with communications materials that would resonate with the target market. While the program provides a tangible service with tested benefits to capture their minds, an emotional sell was also required to capture their hearts. An advertising agency was hired to create a consistent set of messages that were provided to communities for local customization. Input was solicited from community leaders and the target market on a range of ideas presented by the agency.

The results were the **Road Crew, Beats Driving** advertising, logo and slogan, which convey the “no hassle” theme of fun and convenience. The poster featuring “Boxer Shorts Dave” has been a popular way to promote the **Road Crew**. The intent of the poster is for young men to see themselves in Boxer Shorts Dave; he is having a great time because he doesn’t



have to worry about a ride home. They might think “Being a little wild and crazy is okay. As long as the **Road Crew** is there, no harm is done.” Many advertisers appealing to this group take an “over the top” approach to capturing the attention of these young risk-taking males.” A logo sheet and sample poster are in the Resources section of this toolbox.



Branding and Positioning

While the **Road Crew** brand has already been developed, understanding more about branding will help you to customize the brand for the guys in your community, your transportation choice and your unique range of incentives and promotions. There are two important marketing concepts that work together in creating an image of the **Road Crew** in the minds of the target market. These are “branding” and “positioning.”



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BRANDING

Branding is commonly defined as a collection of perceptions in the mind of the consumer. Perceptions are gathered from many sources, such as the target's own experiences, the experiences of others, or advertising that they have been exposed to. An easy way to understand branding is to think of products that are familiar to you and try to label your perceptions. For example ask yourself, "Does the brand make me feel young, sophisticated, cosmopolitan, independent or in control of my life?" Product developers anticipate the answers to these questions and many more when developing a brand's image. With the **Road Crew**, the brand was designed to convey fun, no hassle and the right choice.

The brand image is what sets a product apart from its competition. A further definition comes from branding expert Rob Frankel, who stated: "Branding is not about getting your prospect to choose you over your competition; it's about getting your prospect to see you as the only solution." With the **Road Crew**, you want the ride service to be seen as the only choice to make in your community when someone is considering a night out drinking. This is why limousines turned out to be such an ingenious transportation choice; it was a new product that immediately challenged the old choice with its promise of an easy, enjoyable evening out with friends.

POSITIONING

A definition of positioning is the attempt to influence or control the public's perception of the product; it's how you actively promote the brand in a way that will motivate potential customers to try it. Positioning reflects the personality, values and benefits of the service. Positioning that was developed for the **Road Crew** took into consideration the wants, needs and personality characteristics of 21-to-34-year-old single men who like to go out and have a good time, but may drink excessively and then drive home.

POSITIONING CASE STUDY

Miller Lite was not the first low calorie beer on the market; other brands had tried and failed before them. The others had been positioned as low calorie or diet beer, but people who drink lots of beer don't diet and people who diet don't drink lots of beer. Miller Brewing Company understood the target and positioned itself as the less filling beer. It knew that real beer drinkers wanted to be able to drink more beer, but that they became bloated. Miller Lite allowed them to do what they wanted, which was to drink more beer. This is one of the best examples of using an understanding of the target in order to develop a position that offered a unique benefit.



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Products have attributes, but people buy benefits. The founder of Revlon cosmetics said "In the factory we make cosmetics; in the drugstore we sell hope." Up until now, you have been developing the ride service and the incentives; these are the attributes. Now you need to offer to potential customers a unique meaningful benefit that gives them motivation to try your product. Every impaired driver at some point is hit with the thought that he or she will soon be driving drunk. The unique benefit provided by the **Road Crew**, as perceived by the target market, is that riders can have a good time without the hassle or worries that are associated with alcohol-impaired driving. In two of the original **Road Crew** communities, the target market was attracted to the benefit that taking a limo to, from and among the bars was a great way to keep the party going and make the evening even more fun. Other benefits were that the ride service was low cost and hassle-free.

FROM CREATIVE BRIEF USED TO DEVELOP THE *ROAD CREW* BRAND

Why are we advertising at all?

To create awareness for an evening alternative ride service.

What is the advertising trying to do?

Make the new ride service appealing to men in order to reduce the number of alcohol-related crashes.

Who are we talking to?

Single males, 21 to 34 years old, who may drink excessively.

What are their current attitudes and perceptions?

"My car is here right now. Why wait? There are few options available anyway. I want to keep the fun going all night long."

What is the main promise we need to communicate?

It's more fun when you don't have to worry about driving.

What tone of voice should we use?

The brand character is rugged, cool and genuine. We need to be a "straight shooter" buddy on the barstool next to the target. They do not want to be preached at or told what to do (works like "program" may cause him to tune out). We need to communicate in a language they can relate to.



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Delivering the Right Message

Making the target market aware of the new service with a message that is compelling is important. You can have the best ride service in the world, but if no one knows about it or doesn't feel it suits them, it will literally go nowhere. When designing a promotional campaign, you have to get into the mindset and motivations of the target audience, and deliver a message that feels right to them. The message needs the right combination of facts about the ride service you will offer and feelings that you wish to elicit about the behavior. Keep in mind the old saying, "No sale is made entirely in the head or the heart."

It is important to remember that you are not trying to get people to drink less and you are not promoting just the idea that excessive drinking and driving are a bad combination. Rather, you have an attractive new product that competes with driving, and you are selling the benefits of your product. The ultimate goal of these messages is very specific: to change the behavior of young men who drink to excess and then drive.

You need to be focused on the products and incentives that you have developed and communicate how these are a better choice than driving home at the end of the evening. The short-term goal is to create awareness and good feelings about your ride program. This single-minded focus must be clear in every message that you develop.

The best way to find out if you are on the right track is to get as much feedback as possible. This includes listening to members of the target group who are on the project team and have them get formal and informal feedback from their friends. If you sense that they have objections, your time will be well-spent getting to the bottom of their concerns. The lesson here is that even if your ride service, incentives or messages do not resonate with members of the planning team, that's fine – you are not the target market.

You have to ask members of the target market for their opinions, listen to what they tell you, and then act on that feedback.

This won't guarantee success, but will surely make it more likely. An advisory board consisting of members of the target is a must in understanding how to appeal to young guys in your town. The communities that used this board most heavily developed successful program that the target wanted to use. It may be difficult to absorb the idea that you should listen to a bunch of young guys who frequently drink and drive, but if you want to get them to change their behaviors, you'll develop the product for them.



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Product Introduction:

Getting the Target to Notice and Try the *Road Crew*

The members of your target market will go through several stages between knowing nothing at all about the ride service and becoming your most loyal riders. These stages are awareness, attitude, trial behavior and repeat behavior. Let's look at how these work together to develop patrons for your service.

- ▶ The first step is to create awareness, which is defined as a person's recognition of the product. The highest level of awareness is top-of-mind. This means the ***Road Crew*** is the first thing people think of when considering how to go to the bar and get home.
- ▶ Your second goal in the communications process is to create a positive attitude or feeling toward the product in the minds of the prospective users. A message that is focused on the motivations of the target market presented in appealing language and tone will have a positive impact on attitude.
- ▶ If you have created awareness and generated a positive attitude, the next logical step is for people to choose your ride service. Trial behavior is difficult because there is always risk in trying out something new. To overcome this risk, marketers often offer incentives that make it easier to try, such as coupons or raffles.
- ▶ You don't want people to use the service only once – you want it to become a habit and an ongoing choice. Repeat behavior indicates that the first experience was positive, and there is a positive attitude toward trying it again.

A GOOD BEGINNING IS HALF THE BATTLE

Almost from the minute you begin developing your ride system, you should be planning its introduction to the community. Launching the ***Road Crew*** with a high-profile event can generate enthusiasm and quickly create a critical mass of trial behavior. You'll want to start with a fun kickoff event that attracts future riders, and maybe give them a chance to try it for the first time at no or reduced cost. You might have a "charter members" club for the first people who make a commitment to the program. Line up sports leagues and bar owners to show their support. Consider a celebrity chairperson for a kickoff event. In any case, this is your best opportunity to make a big splash and generate lots of good will and publicity for your service.



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Promotional Ideas

Your messages may be delivered in many formats. Most of the time, you will want to use media choices that reach as many people as possible in your target market, while minimizing the delivery to people who are not in the key group of 21-to-34-year-old single males. Sometimes you might make the conscious decision to communicate with others involved, like the entire community, or just tavern workers, or just friends and relatives of the primary target. There are numerous creative ways you can generate awareness and create a positive attitude toward your program. Here are a few ideas to get you started. You are limited only by your imagination, but keep in mind that all messages, regardless of form, need to be consistent in tone and content.

MASS MEDIA - PAID

- Types ▶ Newspapers, radio, television, billboards.
- Benefits ▶ Raise overall awareness by reaching a large audience.
- Tactics ▶ Buy space that reaches target audience.
- ▶ Insert flyers on specific newspaper routes.

MASS MEDIA - UNPAID

- Types ▶ Newspapers, radio, television.
- Benefits ▶ Save money with unpaid promotion.
- ▶ Develop media outlets as project partners.
- Tactics ▶ Produce public service announcements.
- ▶ Send press releases featuring events that have photo opportunities.
- ▶ Make appearances on local shows for radio and television.
- ▶ Write guest columns for print media.

POINT OF SALE

- Types ▶ Make material available at bars, restaurants, hotels and residences where people are likely to make the decision to contact the ride service.
- Benefits ▶ Most direct place to reach target audience.
- Tactics ▶ Display posters on bar walls or in restrooms.
- ▶ Imprint coasters with **Road Crew** name and dispatch phone number.
- ▶ Have servers wear promotional T-shirts. Bar owners and servers are opinion-leaders within the target group, so their visible support goes a long way.
- ▶ Leave flyers on the windshield of vehicles parked at bars, restaurants, shopping malls and sports venues (with permission).
- ▶ Distribute leaflets on the doorknobs of homes and apartments.



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COLLABORATIONS WITH PARTNERS

- Types ▶ Distribute information to employees and customers of their organizations and identify other ways of spreading the word.
- Benefits ▶ Expand awareness of program in an easy, low-cost way.
- Tactics ▶ Write articles for newsletters, such as employer publications, church bulletins, nonprofit organizations, schools and neighborhood associations.
- ▶ Do speaking engagements at employers and civic group meetings.

EVENTS

- Types ▶ Many options, such as golf outings and casino nights. Can be used to kick off the program or periodically as needed.
- Benefits ▶ Create excitement, raise awareness, encourage good feelings and future behavior and raise funds.
- Tactics ▶ Celebrity involvement can enhance the project's image. Consider a one-time appearance or an ongoing role, such as honorary chairperson.
- ▶ Community celebrations, such as festivals, parades and fairs are great places to have a booth or distribute literature.

Action Steps

Worksheet: *Planner & Checklist*

You should create a Promotions committee from the members of the project team and from other partners you've identified who might support this initiative. They should report back regularly to the project team to get feedback and approval to implement their recommendations.

Their responsibilities include:

- ▶ gaining the commitment of media partners
- ▶ developing an annual communications promotions plan
- ▶ planning the kickoff event
- ▶ providing income and expense information for the project budget

Once you have hired a program coordinator, he or she may be responsible for ongoing awareness, but you'll have a head start if you begin developing your plan right away.



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Coordinating communications between coalition members, the media and the community at large can be tricky. Everyone in the coalition needs to stay “on point,” which means they all need to know the message you are trying to convey, and must communicate the same major points when talking about the project. The Planner & Checklist should be a useful tool to summarize the key aspects of a media campaign and help the partners be aware of the main talking points.

PROMOTIONS CASE STUDY

The **Road Crew** demonstration communities found it difficult to use television advertising because they were not in primary media markets. Cable television provided a good solution, however. They were able to purchase targeted time slots at an affordable rate on cable shows that appealed to the target market and that were likely to be aired in bars. The local cable company produced the ad at a reduced cost.



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Planner & Checklist

THEME
What is the purpose of the campaign?
Does the promotion emphasize the benefits to the target market?
Does the message elicit positive feelings about the Road Crew ?
Is there a specific call to action in the promotional materials?
MEDIA
What is the advertising and publicity plan?
Does the distribution method reach the target audience better than other alternatives?
Who will be the primary media contact?
What is the approval process for press releases, advertisements, and other print material?



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PROMOTIONAL AND SPECIAL EVENT MATERIALS

What materials and resources will be used?

How will these reflect the campaign goal?

What special events are planned?

Who will create, approve and distribute the promotional materials?

What is the budget for promotional materials?

CHECKLIST

	Yes	No
Does the message clearly state the incentive/reward?		
Does it ask for a desired behavior?		
Does it respond to a need of the target market?		
Does it state a benefit to the target market?		
Does it convey the fun, no hassle image of the Road Crew ?		
Is it clear, credible, and appealing to the target market?		

